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ABSTRACT

A study examined relationships among per capita personal income (and by inference, socioeconomic status) of various area development districts of Kentucky and student performance on basic skills tests. The students tested were admitted to the teacher education program at Eastern Kentucky University in 1983-84. The hypothesis tested was: There is no significant difference between the average per capita personal income and basic skills scores of teacher education students. Comparisons were made on scores of students from eight low income areas and scores of all teacher education candidates in the following tested areas: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics, and English (grammar). No significant differences were found between the average per capita income and basic skills subscores of the students tested. It was concluded that adequately prepared teacher education candidates are attracted from all geographical areas. Score results are presented in tables, and the conclusions are analyzed. (JD)

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AREA PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME AND BASIC SKILLS SCORES OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Americans are more favorably disposed toward the public schools today than at any time in the last decade (Gallup, 1984). Americans have also become significantly more favorably disposed toward public school teachers and administrators (Gallup, 1984). Americans continue to feel that public education contributes more to national strength than either industrial might or military power.

Americans give top priority to the traditional "basics" - math and English - with the so-called "new basic" of science and computer science considered less important but gaining since 1981. Ninety-six percent would require mathematics for college bound students and 94% would require English. In addition, a large majority would require history/U.S. government and science. Sixty-eight percent would support computer science as a required course. Sixty-five percent also favor a standard nationwide test for graduation from high school (Gallup, 1984).

Although teaching as a career has lost favor steadily during the last 5 years, results from this years, Gallup survey indicate that the downward trend may have ended. Approximately half of the respondents said they would like a daughter (50%) or son (46%) to take up teaching in the public schools as a career. Americans support, by wide margins, the idea of career ladders for teachers and state board teacher examinations in every subject.

There is a growing concern in educational circles as well as the general public about the knowledge and preparation of individuals attracted to teacher education programs. There is general agreement on the need to attract the best prepared students into teacher education. Geographic areas of low per capita income are often associated with poorer school

districts, lower expectations of students, less well prepared students, less qualified teachers, and less emphasis on basic skills in preparation for college. Therefore, it might be assumed that a teacher education program which serves students from areas of low per capita income would have teacher education candidates who show lower scores on tests of basic skills. This may become a complete cycle as these candidates are graduated from teacher education programs and return to areas of low per capita income to teach students, some of whom will be the next generation of teacher candidates. Are teacher education candidates who are lacking in basic skills drawn from areas of low per capita personal income? Are graduates of teacher education programs who lack basic skills being returned to areas of low per capita income as teachers?

Eastern Kentucky University is the largest producer of teachers in Kentucky and draws a majority of its teacher education students from the eastern half of the state. Eight of the Area Development District (ADD's) contribute a majority of the teacher education students. The eight Area Development Districts (ADD's) of the state were selected for examination because (1) they are areas of relatively low per capita personal income, and (2) Eastern Kentucky University has a relatively large number of teacher education students from these areas. Students are attracted from these relatively poor districts, educated as teachers, and potentially returned to these districts as teachers. The eight ADD's selected range in per capita personal income (1981) from $5,970 to $9,195. Only two of ADD's exceeded the Kentucky average per capita personal income of $8,416. Most districts are characterized by coal mining, farming and limited industries with a relatively high rate of unemployment. The exceptions are the two districts with the highest income which have a more diversified

economy and are located in central and northern Kentucky. They exceed the state average of $8,416 with per capita personal incomes of $9,195 and $9,075, respectively.

This study examines the relationships between per capita personal income (and by inference socio-economic status) of various Area Development Districts of Kentucky and students from these districts who were admitted to the teacher education program at Eastern Kentucky University in 1983-84. Specifically, the following hypothesis was tested: There is no significant difference between the average per capita personal income of Area Development Districts of student origin and basic skills scores of teacher education students. In order to test this hypothesis, teacher education student scores on four of the subtests of the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK) for students from eight of the fifteen Area Development Districts of Kentucky were compared with the subscores for all teacher education candidates. Scores for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics, and English (grammar) were used. These are all used by the Eastern Kentucky University College of Education as criteria for admission to teacher education programs.

Table 1 shows the area per capita personal income along with the TASK scores on vocabulary, comprehension, mathematics, and grammar for 405 teacher education candidates from each of the eight Area Development Districts (ADD's). These scores can also be compared to the average of all teacher education candidates on each of the four subtests of TASK.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Of the 405 teacher education candidates in this study, 73% were female and 27% were male. All come from Eastern Kentucky University. When compared to the TASK grade 13 norms, all the Eastern Kentucky University 1983-84 teacher education candidates had the following percentile ranks, respectively; vocabulary - 73rd, comprehension - 73rd, mathematics 71st, and English grammar - 75th.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the relationships between the TASK subtest scores for students of origin from each of the eight Area Development Districts (ADD's).

Table 2 shows the ANOVA for Vocabulary. There was no significant difference at the .05 level.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Table 3 shows the ANOVA for Comprehension. There was no significant difference at the .05 level.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Table 4 shows the ANOVA for Mathematics. There was no significant difference at the .05 level.

Insert Table 4 About Here

Table 5 shows the ANOVA for Grammar. There was no significant difference at the .05 level.

Insert Table 5 About Here

The null hypothesis is accepted. There appears to be no significant difference between the average per capita income of the Area Development Districts of origin and TASK basic skills subscores of the 1983-84 teacher education candidates at Eastern Kentucky University. The ANOVA was not significant at the .05 level of confidence of any comparisons. Therefore, one may conclude that adequately prepared teacher education candidates are attracted from all geographical areas based on their TASK subtest scores on four areas of basic skills.

There are several possible conclusions: (1) teaching as a career has not lost its appeal among able students; (2) among poorer areas (based on personal per capita income) teaching is a respected and relatively secure profession; (3) teachers are relatively well paid as compared to other occupations in areas of low personal per capita income and high unemployment; (4) only the more able and better academically prepared students from low income/or poor school districts choose teaching as a profession; (5) the success, reputation, and traditions of a respected teacher education program in an area continues to attract capable students. Perhaps all these factors and others not identified account for the findings in the study.

One should be careful not to judge the caliber of teachers currently being produced, the graduates, with the qualifications of all students who initially indicate an interest in teacher education programs when they first enroll in college. With more stringent admissions criteria to college and particularly to teacher education programs currently in place, there are a number of increasingly more selective criteria that teacher education students must meet (i.e.-minimum scores on tests of basic skills, overall GPA's, major and professional education GPA's, psycholog-

ical screening, etc.). This may have the effect of attracting more able students in the future and insuring a supply of adequately prepared teachers for our school systems.

Reference

Phi Delta Kappan. "The 16th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools by George H. Gallup," September 1984, pg. 23-38.

TABLE 1

TASK[1] Subtest Scores Compared to
Personal Per Capita Income By ADD's[2]

TASK	Grade 13 Norms %iles	$\bar{X}$ TASK for All 83-84 Tchr. Edu. Candidates	Average Personal Per Capita Income by Area Development Districts (ADD's)							
			$5970	$6151	$6286	$6404	$7141	$8041	$9075	$9195
Vocabulary	73	31.68	31.50	30.43	31.77	31.40	31.34	31.67	31.72	31.98
Comprehension	73	42.24	42.06	42.58	42.90	42.77	43.75	44.27	44.12	43.12
Mathematics	71	33.06	32.29	33.12	32.10	30.90	31.96	33.67	32.68	32.62
Grammar	75	42.80	42.50	42.43	42.22	42.45	44.58	44.87	43.92	42.37

[1]Stanford Test of Academic Skills
[2]Area Development Districts

TABLE 2

ANOVA for Vocabulary Subtest of TASK[2]

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	PR>F
Model	27	586.90	21.74	0.95	0.53
Error	569	12953.89	22.77		
Corrected total	596	13540.80			

*None were significantly different at the .05 level.

[1]Stanford Test of Academic Skills

TABLE 3

ANOVA for Comprehension Subtest of TASK[1]

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	PR>F
Model	27	809.37	29.98	1.15	0.28
Error	569	14868.86	26.13		
Corrected total	596	15678.22			

*None were significantly different at the .05 level.

[1]Stanford Test of Academic Skills

TABLE 4

ANOVA for Mathematics Subtest of TASK[1]

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	PR>F
Model	27	2733.77	101.25	1.24	0.19
Error	569	46580.06	81.86		
Corrected total	596	49313.83			

*None were significantly different at the .05 level.

[1]Stanford Test of Academic Skills

TABLE 5

ANOVA for Grammar Subtest of TASK[1]

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	PR>F
Model	27	1048.56	38.84	1.13	0.29
Error	569	19502.90	34.28		
Corrected total	596	20551.46			

*None were significantly different at the .05 level.

[1]Stanford Test of Academic Skills